

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MANAMA 001337

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, H

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [BA](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL MILLER DISCUSSES COUNTER-TERRORISM, IRAQ,  
ECONOMY WITH CROWN PRINCE

Classified by DCM Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

-----  
Summary  
-----

1. (C) Codel Miller met with Crown Prince Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa August 22 and discussed the domestic security situation, status of counter-terrorism laws in Bahrain, Iraq, the military confrontation in Najaf, U.S. public outreach efforts in the Middle East, Arab-Israeli relations, Afghanistan, the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the domestic economy, and the U.S. Navy presence in Bahrain. The Crown Prince repeatedly stressed the strength of the long-standing U.S.-Bahrain bilateral relationship, noting that both countries had benefited from it. He spoke of enhancing intelligence cooperation, trade and investment relations via the FTA, and the importance of personnel contacts in furthering the mil-mil relationship. Regarding Iraq, he counseled American steadfastness in facing down its enemies there and offered specific suggestions to improve the situation on the ground. End Summary.

2. (C) Representative Jeff Miller (R-FL) led a bipartisan congressional delegation to Bahrain August 22-23 composed of Representatives John Boozman (R-AR), Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam), Tom Cole (R-OK), Jim Marshall (D-GA), and Adam Schiff (D-CA), House Armed Services staff members Michael Higgins and Mark Lewis, and military escorts LTC Richard Simcock and GySgt Lorenzo Chance. The CODEL met with Crown Prince Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Bahrain Defense Force Chief of Staff Major General Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, the Embassy country team, NAVCENT officials, and overnighted on the U.S.S. John F. Kennedy in the Persian Gulf. The Charge and Pol/Econ chief (notetaker) attended the meeting with the Crown Prince.

-----  
Enhanced Intelligence Cooperation with U.S.  
-----

3. (C) Representative Miller opened the meeting by thanking Bahrain for its support for and long-standing relationship with the United States. He briefed the Crown Prince on the CODEL's travels and invited his colleagues to raise any issues of concern. The CP welcomed the group and expressed his condolences for the recent loss of life in Florida due to Hurricane Charley. Representative Schiff asked about the threat of terrorism in Bahrain. The CP noted that there are individuals with the capacity to carry out attacks anywhere in the world and all countries are vulnerable. In an oblique reference to the six Bahrainis arrested in mid-July, he said that when the United States and Bahrain share information, they can build robust cases against those individuals threatening the public order. He stressed that Bahrain wants to enhance its intelligence cooperation with the U.S.

4. (C) Turning to threats from the outside, the CP said that maintaining stability and unity in Iraq would have a positive influence throughout the region and the world. The best way to reach Muslims' "hearts and minds" is to achieve liberty and freedom in Iraq and help broker an equitable solution between Arabs and Israelis.

-----  
New CT Law to Address Terrorist Threat  
-----

5. (C) Representative Bordallo asked about Bahrain's counter-terrorism laws. The CP said that the problem is the weakness of Bahrain's existing conspiracy law. It was written to address the planning of crimes and stipulates a maximum penalty of three years in prison. This is inadequate for use against terrorists, who seek to cause mass casualties, and the country is developing a new conspiracy law to address this kind of threat. Regarding the case of the six Bahrainis, he said that they are behind bars and are "not going anywhere."

-----  
Stable Iraq Free of WMD  
-----

16. (C) Following up on the topic of Iraq, Representative Cole requested the CP's advice on how the U.S. should proceed there. The CP replied that America's actions must be determined by its objectives. If the U.S. really wants a free democracy in Iraq, it must consider the possibility that Iraq could become an Islamic republic. The CP commented that he believes the U.S. objective is a stable Iraq free of weapons of mass destruction. In this case, the Iraqi government should halt the de-Baathification process, which is viewed by many as a process to settle personal vendettas. Rather, the Iraqi government should identify the real criminals and prosecute them, but issue a general amnesty for everyone else, as was done in South Africa, Ireland, and even in Bahrain in the 2002 constitution.

17. (C) Second, the U.S. should support the development of the Iraqi civilian defense force so that Al Sadr and other "jihadists" do not fill the vacuum created by the dissolution of the Iraqi Army. Finally, the CP stated that the United States must steadfastly support its troops on the ground so they can get the job done.

18. (C) Representative Marshall noted that damaging or destroying the Imam Ali Shrine in Najaf could become an anti-American rallying point for our enemies. The Crown Prince said that U.S. and Iraqi forces should avoid destroying the shrine at all cost. However, Muslims would eventually get over some inadvertent damage to it as a result of a military operation. He noted that in 1979, when radicals occupied the mosque in Mecca, the Saudi army ran a tank through the main door and settled the problem.

19. (C) Marshall said that the U.S. position would be improved by voices in the region speaking publicly in support of the United States. The CP replied that Iraqis should speak up before others in the region do so. He noted that the issue of influencing Arab public opinion was being discussed in Washington and recommended the U.S. focus its activities on populous "anchor states" in the region such as Egypt and Morocco.

-----  
Israel's Controversial Settlement Policy  
-----

10. (C) Returning to his theme of enhancing security throughout the region, the Crown Prince said that the Arab street considered Israeli settlement building to be the most controversial issue in Israeli-Palestinian relations. He conjectured that Prime Minister Sharon wants to withdraw from Gaza to focus on strengthening the settlement infrastructure in the West Bank. Rather than pursuing such a contentious policy, Israel could be working with friendly Arabs (like Bahrain) to counter true threats, such as Iranian missiles capable of striking Israel and other countries in the region. He asserted that he has no sympathy for Arafat, who is a problem, and that both the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships had demonstrated no real will to address the fundamental differences between them.

11. (C) Referencing the Codel's travels, the CP said that in Afghanistan, it appeared that the security situation was more stable in larger areas of the country. Stating that a growing economy would lead to a more stable security situation, he suggested that the United States and other developed countries grant trade preferences for Afghanistan's agricultural exports and signal their support for the passage of oil pipelines through Afghan territory.

-----  
Diversify Economy Through FTA  
-----

12. (C) Representative Boozman questioned the CP about Bahrain's expectations related to the U.S. Free Trade Agreement. He replied that stability and security are driven by economic opportunity and growth, and the FTA will permit Bahrain to seize the day and develop a stronger economy. In response to Representative Marshall's follow up question on the long-term future of Bahrain's economy, the Crown Prince said that currently Bahrain's engines of economic growth are petroleum, finance, manufacturing based upon low-cost natural gas, tourism, information technology and other business services, and government. He looks forward to the day when the roles of the government and petroleum sector in the economy are reduced. He recalled the advice of a Singaporean visitor, who said that small nations must produce high quality products, be adaptable, attract new businesses, and "their vision cannot be constrained by their size." He commented that he wants the standard of living of all citizens to improve as a result of enhanced U.S. trade and investment relations via the FTA, and not just the 2,000 wealthy, plugged-in business people.

13. (C) To close the meeting, Representative Miller asked about the status of the DOD-run Bahrain School. The Crown Prince responded that the school is an excellent ambassador

for the United States in Bahrain, and it will produce the next generation of political and business leaders in the country. In addition, it forges personal links between Bahrainis and Americans. In this regard, the CP mentioned that stable relationships are particularly important in military affairs. In an unstated reference to the U.S. global defense posture review, he said that Bahrain and the U.S. Navy had enjoyed great results from their 50-year relationship. Navy personnel had lived and worked side by side with Bahrainis, and when they needed each other, they stood together. The U.S. has always understood the importance of building relationships and should continue to do so into the future.

MONROE